

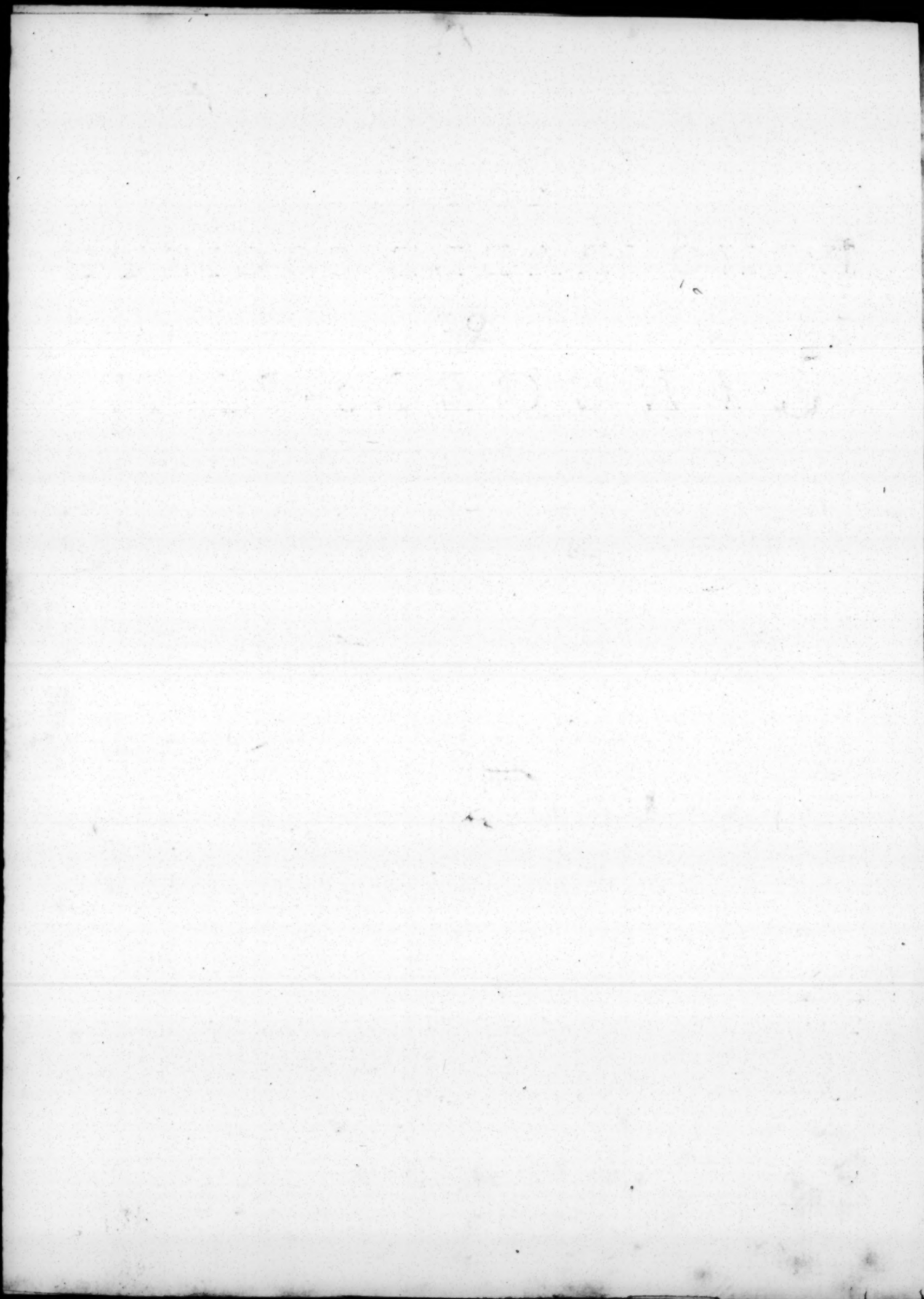
A
LETTER
TO THE *11. Dec. 1742*
HONOURABLE SOCIETY
OF
LINCOLN'S-INN
CONTAINING A
SHORT DEFENCE
OF THE
DOXOLOGY

To be Used at the READING of the
HOLY GOSPELS

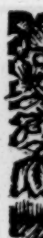
Appointed particularly for
SUNDAYS and other HOLIDAYS.

*Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the ways and see and ask for the
old Paths, where is the good way and walk therein, and ye shall
find rest for your souls, JER. vi. & 16.*

LONDON,
Printed for FLETCHER GYLES over-against Gray's-Inn in Holborn,
MDCCXXXVI.



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L E T T E R
TO THE
H O N O U R A B L E S O C I E T Y
O F
L I N C O L N ' s - I N N .

G E N T L E M E N ,



INCE there have been frequent Endeavours
of late to stifle the usual *Doxology* of *Glory*
be to Thee, O Lord, at the reading of the
holy Gospels, it would be a very great Plea-
sure and Satisfaction to me, if this short Epistle could
any ways contribute towards the redressing so remarka-
ble

ble a Grievance as this unbecoming neglect of a holy Ordinance hath occasioned.

The Offence is so very singular that the *Reverend Gentleman* your present *Reader* must expect to be taken notice of, and I hope he will think it is done as much out of respect to his sacred Authority that he may not abuse it, as for the Defence of the holy Ordinance itself.

If the *Reverend Gentleman* can form any Excuse, I suppose it is this, that *the present Rubrick does not enjoin the use of this Doxology, therefore he is at Liberty to suppress it.* If he can offer any better Excuse he must answer for himself, I am not obliged to guess at any other Motive, he may perhaps slight other Parts of our *Liturgy*, tho' he be at present *conformed* to the Use of them; whether our *Liturgy* in general can deserve this disrespect, is another Question which the *Reverend Gentleman* ought to have been satisfied in, before he suffered himself to *conform*.

All that I contend for at present is, the use of this *Doxology* as well as other Parts of our *Liturgy*. Wherefore to you, *Gentlemen*, I make my Appeal, are we justly offended?—

But let me proceed fairly, and before I demand your Opinion, I desire your impartial Reception of the following Reasons to prove the unjustifiableness of this particular

particular Omission in his performing *Divine Service*, and the Weakness of such an Excuse, as I suppose, may be raised in favour of it.

And here I must confess the last *Act* of *Uniformity* does expressly insist upon the Use of the present *Liturgy* only, and this *Doxology* is omitted in the present Form of *Prayer*. What then? If the former Use of it had created any Offence to the Legislature, it is very probable it would have been taken Notice of some Way or other, if the last *Act* of *Uniformity* did purposely confirm any such Omission or Alteration in the present *Liturgy*.

I grant it is proper the present *Act* should insist upon the Use of the present Form of *Prayer* only, and I grant it is necessary such a publick *Form* must suffer some Alterations, but how and in what Parts? Let us for the Sake of Argument distinguish the Parts of the *Liturgy* into the *variable* and *invariable*, or the *Essential* and *Occasional*, and here common Sense without an *Act* of *Parliament* can inform us what Alterations some particular Parts must suffer as to the Names and Titles of the *King* and *Royal Family*. Particular Occasions may require a particular *Form*, but when the Occasion ceases, or the Circumstances of such an occasional *Form* are apparently changed, then such Omissions and Alterations are apparently necessary:

*Multa renascentur quæ jam cecidere, cadentque
Quæ nunc sunt in honore vocabula.*

Yet

Yet in the Preface to the Book of *Common-Prayer* it seems at first Sight to be deny'd that there are any unalterable Parts of the *Liturgy*; particular Forms of divine *Service* and the Rites and Ceremonies appointed to be used therein being Things in their own Nature indifferent and alterable, and so acknowledg'd; yet surely an entire Alteration of our *Liturgy* would be a Matter of great Importance, and therefore not indifferent; there must be some very good End in view before an extraordinary Alteration can be suffer'd. Neither do the Words of this Preface admit of such an Offence. Some Parts of the *Liturgy*, as such, are supposed to be unalterable: Whether all the *Liturgy* ought to be exploded is another Question, tho' equally incapable of being defended, but since the main Body and Essentials of this Form of *Prayers*, drawn from the Fountain of GOD's Word, and holy Inspiration, have continued hitherto firm and unshaken, notwithstanding all unreasonable and impetuous Assaults, something must be acknowledg'd unalterable when there is no Reason against it but the vain Satisfaction of private Fancies and Interests without Regard to the Publick. So the *invariable* or *Essential* Parts of our *Liturgy* being such as (excepting the Change of obsolete Words, of a less proper Translation and other less important Circumstances) have been constantly held in Use since their first Approbation and Confirmation, the last Act of *Uniformity* could not intend any such Parts should be annulled or disused. Therefore the last Act of Uniformity was certainly made in Affirmance of the former.

As

As to the Use of this *Doxology*, where it does not contradict it must confirm, otherwise it is made for no End, this is both Reason and Law.

I come now directly to the Point, and answer finally and decisively to the Matter of Fact. The *Reverend Gentleman*, I suppose, still insists upon the Disuse of this *Doxology* because the Act disclaims it, as being omitted in the present *Liturgy*. What are the true Reasons of this unfortunate Omission the *Reverend Gentleman* may know better than I: But we may suppose at least in our own Favour, that it was a Thing so well known and so constantly practised, that the Editors of the present *Form of Prayer* might think it almost needless to be inserted again. But tho' it be not actually inserted again, this Omission does not take off the Force of a former Injunction. This *Doxology*, short as it is, would have been thought a very considerable Alteration, since it is one of those Parts I call *invariable* or *Essential*; it is therefore considerable enough to have demanded a good Reason for its Omission; but none being offer'd, it is not to be presumed it was ever intended to be disused, tho' unhappily left out in the present *Liturgy*. For it is not only a considerable Part from the Authorities I shall present you with for the Use of it, but I desire to know how many other Parts of the like Importance are omitted? I believe the *Reverend Gentleman* will think it more prudent to return no Answer, and not condemn himself out of his own Mouth; but I proceed
to

to prevent his Evasions, and observe further, that the Terms of the last *Act of Uniformity*, are not really so expressive in his Favour as he may imagine. He may say the *Act* confirms the present Liturgy, therefore not the former; I say therefore the former; for the Term *present* is easily interpreted not exclusive of the former Parts in Use, which are not since expressly prohibited, but only of any Innovations for the future, which Distinction entirely defeats his *Apology*.

It is moreover natural to suppose no Body ever understood these Terms of the *Act* any otherwise, because the Use of this *Doxology* was not thereupon suspended or censured; and we still have Custom for a Law. Thus much in answer to what I think would be the best *Apology* for him who at this Time of Day rises up in Opposition to the continual Practice of our best and most learned Divines, yet I would first convince him of his Error, and then expostulate with him in hopes of his Reformation.

Now I desire only a favourable Attention to some few Authorities which I am going to produce as very good Reasons why our wise and glorious *Reformers* should retain and confirm the Use of this *Doxology*.

The *ancient Fathers* always mention this *Hymn of Praise* with the utmost Regard, St. *Chrysostom* and St. *Jerome* are sufficient for our Purpose. The former takes particular Notice of the great Reverence always observ'd
upon

upon reading the Holy Gospel, Τῷ Διακόνῳ ἀνοίσειν μέλλοντος τὸ τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τέτραθρον, &c. when the Deacon is ready to open the four Books of the Gospel we all fix our Eyes upon him as attentively as possible, and as soon as he declares whence the *Portion of Scripture* is taken, we presently all rise up acclaiming Δόξα Σοι Κύριε, *Glory be to Thee, O Lord.* St. *Jerom*, of whom *Erasmus* says that he was without Controversy the most learned Prince of Divines in Eloquence, and excelled even *Cicero* himself, assures us this *Doxology* was used *per totas Orientis Ecclesias*, as also in the *Western Churches*, and that the People set up Lights at Noon-day to give a Testimony of their rejoicing when the *Holy Gospel* was read among them. Thus the *Greek Liturgy* orders, and the Ancients used to say before the Gospel was read, *Glory be to Thee, O Lord*, and just after it, *Thanks be to God for his holy Gospel (tanquam Christo praesenti) sapientiam & sermonem Dei hunc esse omnes credentes clamamus Gloria tibi Domine.*

Alcuin de divinis officiis gives a very devout and satisfactory Reason for this laudable Custom. *Quia verba salutem conferentia mox audituri estis, laudate Dominum cujus beneficio hanc gratiam percipere meruistis*, because ye are presently going to hear the Words which confer Salvation upon you, praise ye the Lord by whose merciful Indulgence ye are made worthy to receive this Grace.

All *Churches* in general have certainly acknowledg'd this for a sufficient Reason in this sacred Practice, and
B
they

they would have declared against common Sense had they not admitted a Reason which could be so satisfactory to them all that it could not possibly give offence to any, because the same Salvation was universally expected, and therefore the same Doxology ought to be universally used; whatever Differences there prevailed in other Forms of Worship, no Reason could ever be assigned, either to alter or omit the Use of this *Doxology*; this Form of giving Praise was universally and strictly observed both in the *Arminian* and *Spanish Church*. The *Arminians* as professing themselves more strict Followers of the *Apostles*, used after the *Gospel* was read to greet one another with a *holy Kiss*, in token of their Respect, Love, and Charity which is the fulfilling of the Law, and therefore this was a very proper Salutation upon receiving the blessed *Seal of Redemption*; and in the ancient Council of *Toledo* there is a *Canon* that enjoins the Use of this *Doxology* under the Penalty of Excommunication. In the Use of this we should be justified, as any one else would be justly censur'd for unreasonably opposing a general and laudable Custom were it nothing more. But when we add the exceeding Goodness and Devotion of it, how inexcusable are those who neglect it? *O that Men would therefore praise the Lord for his Goodness: and declare the Wonders that he doth for the Children of Men. That they would exalt him in the Congregation of the People: And praise him in the Seat of the Elders**. And let us therefore se-

* Psalm cvii. ver. 31, 32.

riously consider how inexcusable those are who neglect it, although the *Reverend Gentleman* should interrupt them. But to proceed — Dr. *Comber* informs us from *St. Chrysostom*, that after the *Gospel* was ended, *the Words of Christ dwelt so richly in the People, that they made Melody with Grace in their Hearts, and sung Hallelujahs*, which answers to what is usually chaunted in our Cathedral Churches, *Thanks be to God for his holy Gospel*. It is now Time to insist upon the Authority of our own *Rubrick* in the first Book of *Common-Prayer* confirmed by *Edward* the sixth: The Words run thus: “Immediately after the Epistle is ended, the Priest or
 “one appointed to read the Gospel shall say, the Holy
 “*Gospel* is written in the ——— beginning at the ———
 “and the Clerk and People shall answer, *Glory be to
 “Thee, O Lord;*” and look even to the *Scotch Liturgy*, and you will find it there established. Bishop *Overal* and Bishop *Cosins*, with others, assure us, that this Injunction was discontinued in the present *Rubrick* merely through the Negligence or ill Design of the Printer or those who corrected the Press, and that there is no Authority for laying aside this *Doxology*, as I hope is already sufficiently proved, it being the Word of God.

Having thus confuted all the Excuse that can be made for this Neglect of the *Doxology*, and having laid before you the Authority we have for the Use of it, let us see how unreasonable a Thing it would be to oppose such a laudable Custom, were it not really supported and recommended by the most ancient Writers

of the Church, as well as the most Learned of our Divines, since the very *Rubrick* confirm'd at the *Reformation*. All that we need say for the Unreasonableness of this Neglect of the *Doxology* may be confined to the Compass of a few Words; for we have nothing to do but to ask the *Reverend Gentleman* if a *Doxology* be not good in itself? If it be not as proper to use *one* for the glad Tidings of the *Gospel*, as at the Conclusion of every *Psalms*? I think the best Answer this *Reverend Gentleman* can give to these pressing Questions, will be to make a speedy *Reformation*, and give God the Honour due unto his Name; but what Title shall we fix upon this Neglect, if we reflect upon the Time and Manner in which this *Doxology* was introduced among the Sons of Men; the Time was the Birth of him who brought Light and Salvation into the World to us, who sat in Bondage, and in the Shadow of Death. The Manner was suitable to the great Season, and suddenly there was with the Angel a Multitude of the heavenly Host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, on Earth Peace, good Will towards Men. Why did they glorify God, but purely because he had shewed his Mercy to us miserable Sinners? And since the glorious Benefits of the *Gospel* are particularly sent to us from the Heaven of Heavens, shall we refuse a *Thanksgiving* when the Angels themselves rejoiced to pay it for the Sake of infinite Mercy, amiable and adorable, even where there is no particular Obligation; the Benefit is particularly ours, and by such a Neglect of *Praise* we should prove ourselves

ourselves unreasonable, ungrateful, and exceedingly impious; so he who obstinately maintains such an Error, knowing it to be such, must suffer the Censure of Reason, of Law, and of God.

I hope there is no occasion to spend many more Words in expostulating with the *Reverend Gentleman* upon the Nature of his Offence; let him seriously and impartially consider with himself; first, how unjust it is to defraud the Church of any Part of its *established Ceremonies and Ordinances*; how much the *Antiquity, Usage, Time immemorial, Right prescriptive and Divine*, will prevail against him. *Secondly*, let us remind him that he does not stand before *Mean Men*, and that he ought not to violate the Laws both *human and divine* in the very Face of those who are the *Judges and Dispensers* of the *Law*.

We ought at this Time especially to guard against any Innovations, because some indefensible Opinions are introduced with great Subtlety, and perhaps countenanced by too much Authority.

At present I have nothing more to say of a late and very popular *Performance* than that its Author may be *Pastor aut illud quod dicere nolo*, and deserves the following Lines.

*No Fears can now from Bigotry arise,
Liberty lives, and Superstition dies.*

Things

*Things formidable once, now prove a Jest,
There needs no Int'rest to repeal the Test:
Now restless Consciences may sleep content,
Our Treatise has repeal'd the Sacrament.*

I should not make a Digression to mention this admired Author, were it not probable some of the same Spirit may endeavour to repeal the Use of *Doxologies*.

But tho' an *Angel from Heaven* were to deliver any other *Doctrine* than what is agreeable to the *Holy Scriptures*, we are not to listen to the Voice of the *Charmer* *charm* he never so wisely; and what Pretence can there be for neglecting these sublime *Ejaculations of Praise and Thanksgiving*, which like the *precious Stones* in Aaron's *Breast-plate* embellish the whole Service with distinguished Lustre? O ye *Sons of Levi*, and ye *Daughters of Jerusalem*, worship the Lord in the Purity of your *Hearts*, and in the Beauty of *Holiness*; and till you can find any other *Liturgy* more excellent in all its Parts, do not esteem your selves wiser than your great *Forefathers* and *Reformers*, than those eminent Persons who have compiled, defended, explained, and recommended our *Liturgy*. It is the indispensable Duty of the Ministers of God's holy Word and Sacraments to take heed unto themselves, and their *Doctrine*; let me, from an excellent Author*, add a Description of the different Lots prepared for the different Behaviour of *Ministers*, that the Offender may be moved to a Reformation by

* The late divine Poems on Heaven and Hell.

the Power of Verse, tho' he may disdain a dull Complaint in Prose, as the Divine *Herbert* says.

*A Verse may reach him who a Sermon flies,
And turn Delight into a Sacrifice.*

For

—— *the most abhorr'd of human Race
Shall wicked Priests and Prelates find their Place;
Prelates and Priests, who partial preach'd God's Laws,
Flatter'd his Enemies, betray'd his Cause, &c.*

But in the Regions of Bliss.

—— *are holy Priests for Learning fam'd,
And Piety, who with true Zeal inflam'd,
With solid Judgment cool'd, maintain'd God's Cause
Against his Enemies, and preach'd his Laws.
By their illustrious Labours which survive
Their mortal Life, and with the World shall live.
Sham'd the proud Scorners, Heresies refell'd,
And from th' obscurer Text the Clouds dispell'd;
Sav'd others Souls, and more than sav'd their own*——

*But lest the Muse should seem, while keen on Vice
Herself to flatter, as she that descrys,
The worst of Men she loves, and would reform,
Howe'er against their wicked Actions warm.*

And now, GENTLEMEN, it is Time to take my Leave, and to profess my self with great Sincerity

Your most obedient humble Servant.

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